



Vol. 4 Issue 5 May 2021

# IMPACT UPDATE

Protecting, Preventing, Providing

Larry Hogan

Boyd K. Rutherford

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Governor

Lt. Governor

Superintendent

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Sgt. Roger Schwarb was honored as the 2020 NCO of the Year.

## Superintendent Presents MSP Employee of the Year Awards

(JESSUP, MD) – Maryland State Police Superintendent Colonel Woodrow Jones III presented 2020 employee of the year and other outstanding performance awards to Department employees for actions above and beyond the call of duty.

During an abbreviated event with limited attendance that included appropriate health precautions, Sergeant Roger Schwarb of the Criminal Enforcement Division was named Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. The Trooper of the Year is a criminal investigator also assigned to the Criminal Enforcement Division. PCO II Krystle Aull, of the North East Barrack, was awarded Police Communications Operator of the Year and PCS Bethany Richards, of the JFK Memorial Highway Barrack, won Police Communications Supervisor of the Year.

“Your actions made an impact, made a difference and made Maryland safer and stronger for our citizens and our families,” Maryland State Police Superintendent Colonel Woodrow Jones III said. “Each of you being honored acted in an extraordinary way, displaying bravery in times of danger and relentless commitment in times of challenge. All of you performed with an outstanding sense of duty to the citizens of Maryland whom we serve. You represent the spirit of integrity, fairness and service that has guided the Maryland State Police for 100 years.”

Sergeant Roger Schwarb, the 2020 NCO of the Year, was acknowledged for his work as an investigator, a supervisor, a mentor, and someone always helping other troopers become more professional.

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# IMPACT UPDATE

## AWARDS: Honoring Maryland's Finest

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During just one of his many investigations last year, Sgt. Schwarb was contacted by the Computer Crimes Unit and asked to investigate a fraud case involving an elderly man who had fallen victim to an internet scam. The victim had been defrauded of more than \$5,000.

Sgt. Schwarb worked with the FBI to determine the IP addresses were from out of the country. Instead of giving up when confronted with that obstacle, he persevered. He worked with the Target department store at the corporate level and was able to obtain information surrounding the transactions, as well as video surveillance.

Ultimately, he was able to develop a suspect, obtain a search warrant and identify multiple suspects in an international theft ring that was using telephone fraud, gift cards and other criminal means to obtain products that were then being shipped out of the country for sale in other parts of the world.

The 2020 Trooper of the Year is a trooper first class assigned to the Criminal Enforcement Division. He is not being identified due to the types of duties he is assigned, which can include working as an undercover investi-

gator. The narrative of his work last year reads like a law enforcement highlight reel.

During a crime suppression initiative in Cecil County, he made a traffic stop that led to a probable cause search and the recovery of a firearm, ammunition, and crack cocaine. The two occupants of the vehicle were arrested and further investigation by the trooper identified the suspects as members of a violent street gang from Newcastle, Delaware. Additional information he developed led to the closure of a shooting in Delaware and the recovery of more ammunition and felony amounts of drugs.

During an investigation into a violent home invasion in Cecil County that led to the federal prosecution of seven suspects, the trooper obtained information regarding the identity of a suspect in a cold-case homicide in Harford County. The victim was murdered in Edgewood in February of 2019 while delivering food for a local restaurant. The suspect was identified as a ranking member of the Bloods criminal gang. The trooper, assisted by the Harford County Sheriff's Office and ATF, pursued additional investigative avenues to corroborate the information and, as a result of interviews, search warrants and a lot of investigative work, the trooper and allied in-

vestigators developed additional evidence of the suspect's involvement in the victim's murder. Two additional suspects identified as co-conspirators are also expected to be charged.

In another case, the trooper was off-duty when he made a traffic stop on I-95. A probable cause search uncovered \$100,000 worth of ketamine. Two suspects were arrested, who were believed to be transporting the drugs from Brooklyn, New York, to Baltimore. They were identified as being involved in an elaborate trans-continental drug distribution organization.

Police Communications Operator of the Year Krystle Aull, of the North East Barrack, was commended for her professionalism and for making the safety of the troopers her main priority. She ranked number one at the barrack for the entry and clearance of warrants and is known for her ability to multitask even during stressful and demanding situations.

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# IMPACT UPDATE

## AWARD: Highlighting Great Achievements

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One example of her work occurred in July when, during a busy shift, she took a call from someone who said they had just watched their neighbor stab and kill someone. PCO Aull immediately dispatched troopers, took down additional information, and called for EMS, all while keeping the caller calm and on the line during the chaotic event. She was recognized by the Maryland State Police Homicide Unit for her work during this incident.

Police Communications Supervisor of the Year Bethany Richards is described by her colleagues as ‘the best supervisor anyone could hope for,’ ‘the best of the best,’ and ‘a hard-working supervisor who is honest, fair and willing to do anything she asks of her PCOs.’ She oversees the warrant program at the JFK Barrack and is an instructor in multiple areas related to police communication work.

In August, PCS Richards was the communications operator when troopers from the JFK Barrack were involved in a multi-state vehicle pursuit of a felony suspect. She maintained communications while answering incoming calls on the phone and radio. She updated locations so troopers could deploy stop sticks on the pursuit route. During the pursuit, a trooper was severely injured in a

crash. Without hesitation, PCS Richards contacted EMS and assigned troopers to remain at the crash scene while coordinating troopers who were still involved in the pursuit. As the pursuit moved out of state, she coordinated with allied law enforcement. The suspect was ultimately arrested in Pennsylvania.

Trooper First Class Matthew McWilliams was presented a Governor’s Citation for bravery. On December 10, 2019, Trooper First Class Matthew McWilliams was working the stationary post at the Parkton scale house, when a truck driver stopped and reported that a vehicle was on fire just north of the scale house.

TFC McWilliams responded and found a tractor trailer off the roadway with the truck tractor fully engulfed in fire. He ran to the burning vehicle and located the driver, who was partially ejected from the cab of the truck. The driver’s feet were pinned under a portion of the cab and his lower body was on fire.

TFC McWilliams used a fire extinguisher to spray down the driver. Someone stopped with additional extinguishers and the trooper continued to fight the fire. He was able to suppress the fire to the point that the driver was no longer on fire, but attempts to pull the driver free had failed.

During the rescue attempt, the diesel fuel tank exploded, covering TFC McWilliams with fuel, but he continued trying to save the driver. When fire department personnel arrived, TFC McWilliams continued assisting with rescue efforts until the driver was freed and transported to the hospital.

During his heroic actions to rescue the driver, TFC McWilliams suffered 1st degree burns to both of his arms. He also injured both his legs, with lacerations, bruising, swelling, and a knee injury. In addition to these injuries, TFC McWilliams was also treated for smoke inhalation. He was transported to a hospital for treatment of his injuries.

Additional awards were presented for lifesaving, being injured in the line-of-duty, and for outstanding performance in assigned duties.



# IMPACT UPDATE

## MSP, Labor Department Warn Public Of Unemployment Insurance, Other Scams

(PIKESVILLE, MD) – The Maryland Department of State Police and the Maryland Department of Labor are warning the public of an increase in unemployment insurance related fraud cases and other scams being reported in the region.

In recent months, investigators have been contacted regarding a wide variety of schemes targeting individuals, vulnerable populations, charities and local, state and national government agencies. Most recently, this included a scheme where random citizens received multiple unemployment insurance debit cards that they never applied for from the state and even from other states.

Another recent fraud involved gift cards, which primarily targeted the elderly population. Most often, consumers were told that they needed to purchase gift cards to use as payments for a government agency bill, a ransom, a utility bill, tech support, or to avoid an arrest. The reasons they presented varied, but they always came back to the idea that a consumer must go to a retail outlet, purchase physical gift cards, and then provide the PIN numbers on the cards to the scammer. Reports suggest scammers favored certain brands of gift cards and those changed over time.

Additional trending frauds include

ones that target Medicare recipients, lotteries, banks, charities, those seeking COVID-19 vaccinations and ones that claimed were connected to the Census. Despite the variety of frauds out there, there are simple steps everyone can take to minimize their chances of becoming a victim.

Please be aware of pages and scammers on social media pretending to be the Maryland Department of Labor. Scammers are replicating the Maryland Department of Labor's social media pages, directly messaging claimants, and attempting to steal their identity by asking for their personal information.

These pages are particularly targeting members of unemployment groups on Facebook.

Fraudulent pages may look similar, but are newly created, do not have a lengthy history of posts, spelled differently (often with typos), and not verified with a blue check mark. "Maryland department of labour" is an example of a fraudulent page that looks similar, but is spelled differently. If you find a fraudulent page, please report it to the social media platform immediately and DO NOT respond to their messages.

If you suspect a fraud, contact your local police department. You may also report unemployment fraud by visiting **MDunemployment.com**.





# IMPACT UPDATE

## MSP, Allied Agencies Address Distracted Driving As Part Of Statewide Initiative

(PIKESVILLE, MD) – Maryland State Police issued hundreds of citations and warnings related to distracted driving violations as part of a statewide effort Thursday to combat the issue on Maryland roads.

The initiative was conducted in partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office and AAA Mid-Atlantic as part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month. It was also part of MDOT MVA's Highway Safety Office's "Be the Focused Driver" effort, a sub-theme of the office's new overarching "Be the Driver" highway safety campaign.

Overall, troopers issued 386 citations, 474 warnings and 40 safety equipment repair orders as part of the initiative on April 8. Of those, 116 citations and 119 warnings were issued specifically for distracted driving violations. Maryland State Police was one of 40 law enforcement agencies to participate in the initiative. Each year distracted driving contributes to more than 26,000 injuries and 180 fatalities on Maryland roads.

Among the highlights of the initiative for individual barracks within Maryland State Police:



- **Prince Frederick Barrack** – 22 warnings, 1 drug arrest
- **Leonardtown Barrack** – 19 citations, 28 warnings and 12 safety equipment repair orders
- **Berlin Barrack** – 35 citations (30 distracted driving), 17 warnings (all for distracted driving)
- **Glen Burnie Barrack** – 18 citations (7 seatbelts, 5 cellphones, 2 speeding), 17 warnings (4 cellphones and 7 speeding)
- **Rockville Barrack** – 104 citations, 78 warnings, 19 safety equipment repair orders issued and 2 arrests for outstanding warrants
- **Hagerstown Barrack** – 51 citations and 28 warnings and 2 warrant arrests
- **Frederick Barrack** – 20 citations (7 for cellphone violations), 33 warnings (20 for cellphone violations)
- **Forestville Barrack** – 22 citations, 8 warnings, 1 safety equipment repair order, 2 arrests (DUI and a warrant arrest).



# IMPACT UPDATE



## Hundreds Of Citations Issued In Traffic Enforcement Initiative To Combat Street Racing In Baltimore Co.

(PIKESVILLE, Md.) — During a four-day high visibility traffic enforcement initiative to combat illegal racing in the areas of I-70, I-695 and I-795, troopers, along with Baltimore County police, issued over 300 traffic citations and warnings for a variety of offenses, including speeds that reached 106 mph.

Throughout this initiative, which took place March 25-28, troopers from the Maryland State Police Golden Ring Barrack and the Baltimore County police officers focused on speeding and aggressive driving.

Overall, troopers and officers issued 248 citations, 78 warnings, 22 safety equipment repair orders and made nine impaired driving

arrests. Of those, 82 citations and 22 warnings were speeding related and one crash that was investigated is believed to have been related to an illegal street race.

Overtime associated with this initiative was paid for in part by a grant from the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office. Maryland State Police are planning targeted initiatives with allied agencies, including Baltimore County Police, throughout the next several months.

These are among the latest in several efforts troopers have taken to address the issue. In 2020, the Golden Ring Barrack received 93 calls over concerns about illegal

racing in Baltimore County.

These high visibility enforcement efforts are aimed at reducing the number of aggressive driving and motor vehicle crashes in which speed, alcohol and other driving violations are contributing factors to crashes on Maryland roads.

Those charged with illegal racing could face up to a \$500 fine and potential jail time. Anyone who witnesses an illegal street race or has information about an upcoming race is asked to contact the Golden Ring Barrack at 410-780-2700.



# IMPACT UPDATE



## Troopers Recover Seven Guns During Traffic Incidents

(PIKESVILLE, MD) – Maryland state troopers recovered seven guns during traffic stops and crashes across the state from April 2-4.

On April 2, troopers from the Glen Burnie Barrack responded to the area of I-695 and Rt. 295 for the report of a crash. The driver was seen walking away from the site. Troopers caught up to him on Rt. 259 near Nursery Road and noticed signs of impairment. He was taken into custody and a search found a loaded handgun in his waistband. The gun was reported stolen from Florida.

Shortly after 6 p.m., a trooper in Talbot County stopped a vehicle along Rt. 50. A probable cause search led to the recovery of a loaded handgun in the vehicle. The driver was arrested.

Shortly before 9:30 p.m. in April 3, a trooper in Calvert County stopped a car on Rt. 4. The driver had a suspended/revoked license and was found to be wanted on a warrant from Baltimore City.

Suspected drugs and a handgun were found in the vehicle. The driver was arrested.

About 2:30 a.m. on April 4, a trooper in Prince George's County responded to a single vehicle crash on Rt. 50 at Rt. 201. The driver was arrested for driving under the influence. He requested troopers look for his cell phone. While doing so, troopers found a loaded handgun inside the vehicle.

At 4:30 a.m., a trooper, stopped a car on I-495 at Rt. 5 in Prince George's County. The driver got out of his car carrying a black trash bag and jumped the guard-rail. He went down the embankment to a stream. Upon reaching the water, he complied with the trooper's directions and walked back up the hill, without the bag. He was arrested for DUI and the trooper found ammunition in his pocket. A search of the trash bag the driver left in the water led to the recovery of a handgun and ammunition. The driver was arrested.

Just before 4:30 p.m., a trooper from the Annapolis Barrack stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation on Rt. 50. While conducting a probable cause search for marijuana, troopers recovered a loaded handgun under the driver's seat. The driver was prohibited from possession firearms and ammunition. He was arrested.

Shortly after 1 a.m. on April 5, a trooper from the La Plata Barrack stopped a car for an equipment violation on Rt. 301 in Charles County.

During a probable cause search for marijuana, the trooper recovered a loaded handgun under the driver's seat. Troopers also recovered about one-half pound of marijuana. The driver was arrested. The gun was reported lost or stolen from Montgomery County.



# IMPACT UPDATE



## ‘Unsung Heroes’ Honored On National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

Since 1981, National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week has honored the thousands of men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world’s citizens.

Among those are the police communications operators, police communications supervisors and each person involved in their support staff with the Maryland State Police. Col. Woodrow W. Jones III, Maryland State Police Superintendent, said each of these

women and men play a vital role in the mission of the department.

“What impresses me most about our police communications personnel is their genuine concern for our troopers,” Col. Jones said. “Our staff behind the microphone is relentlessly vigilant in monitoring situations involving our troopers that range from nighttime traffic stops to barricades and other obviously life-threatening situations.

“Many times in my career, I’ve overheard a PCO referring to the

troopers on her or his shift as ‘my troopers.’ It is clear our PCOs are personally invested in what they do and they always have the safety of our troopers as their priority.”

Among those Colonel Jones is referring to is Acting Police Communications Supervisor Arlene Major from the Golden Ring Barrack.

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# IMPACT UPDATE

## Crashes Highlight The Importance Of State's 'Move Over' Laws

(PIKESVILLE, MD) – Two crashes in which troopers were struck while sitting stationary along state highways last month highlighted the importance of Maryland's "Move Over" laws.

Shortly after 3:30 a.m. on April 3, a trooper was in a marked patrol vehicle was parked on a closed ramp along southbound Rt. 295 near Annapolis Junction. The driver of a Toyota Rav 4 drove through traffic cones and highway signs before striking the trooper, who was seated in the patrol car

The trooper was transported to Shock Trauma in Baltimore. The

driver of the Toyota was transported to MedStar Harbor Hospital for treatment. Charges are pending.

At about 7:15 p.m. on April 4, a trooper from the Forestville Barrack was sitting in a patrol car with its emergency lights on at the scene of a disabled vehicle on the right shoulder of southbound I-495 at Rt. 202. The trooper was struck in the rear by a vehicle.

Drivers are reminded of Maryland's move over law, which requires drivers approaching certain vehicles on the shoulder of the road from the rear to move to an adjacent lane if safe to do so, or if

not, to slow to a reasonable and safe speed as they pass the scene.

The law requires this action to be taken by all vehicles approaching an emergency vehicle using visual signals, as well as tow trucks, fire trucks, medical and rescue units, transportation, service and utility vehicles, as well as waste and recycling trucks with yellow or amber flashing lights or signal devices.

To see F/Sgt. Dante Briley in a new 'move over' public service message, check out the MD State Police Facebook page.

## UNSUNG: Helping Keep Troopers Safe

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PCS Major, whose father was a New Mexico state trooper, said during a recent interview that their biggest goal on the job is ensuring the safety of the troopers.

"So the biggest goal is knowing they are going home to their family at the end of the day," PCS Major said. "That is the biggest reward. Their safety is our utmost priority."

Col. Jones added that type of commitment, demonstrated by dedicated telecommunicators through-

out our Department every day, is a big reason why our troopers are going home safe at the end of their shift.

"Police communications operators do so much more than answer phones and dispatch calls, but regardless of what they are doing, they will drop it all and focus every ounce of energy and attention on making sure our troopers stay as safe as possible by minimizing every risk they can," Col. Jones said.

"They know the information they obtain from a caller, or from one

of the many computer databases they are searching, could mean the difference for their trooper's safety during an incident."

After an especially stressful situation, PCS Major said, "It's a good feeling when a trooper comes in and just says thank you. Thank you for not going anywhere, for answering everything. Sometimes a trooper says I'm glad it was you on that end of the radio and not me."